

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 IO-14 ACDA-19 DRC-01

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R 261441Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 679

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 4761

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR YO UR XH

SUBJ: TIMING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF COMINFORMIST REVELATIONS

REF: BELGRADE 4681

1. SUMMARY: FAILURE OF KARDELJ'S MISSION TO MOSCOW IS PRINCIPAL REASON FOR EXPOSE OF COMINFORMIST PLOT IN TITO'S SPEECH AT JESENICE SEPT 12. ACCORDING TO SOVIET DIPLOMAT, REVELATIONS WILL MEAN A SERIOUS SETBACK IN YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS. WE EXPECT YUGOSLAVS WILL CONTINUE MONITORING BLOC ACTIVITIES CLOSELY BUT UNLESS THERE ARE LATER REVELATIONS OF EVEN MORE FLAGRANT ACTIVITIES, WE BELIEVE TITO'S PREFERENCE IS TO MINIMIZE FRICTION WITH SOVIETS. END SUMMARY

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2. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS ON COMINFORMIST TRIALS REVEAL

THAT COMINFORMISTS HAVE BEEN YUGOSLAV CONCERN FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS. QUESTION ARISES WHY YUGOSLAVS CHOSE THIS PARTICULAR TIME TO CONCLUDE TRIALS AND GO PUBLIC WITH CASE. A LARGER QUESTION IS WHAT SIGNIFICANCE CAN BE ATTACHED TO DISCOVERY THAT SOVIETS AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ALLIES - OR AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS THEIR BUREAUCRACIES - CONSPIRED TO OVERTURN TITOIST POLITICAL ORDER AT SAME TIME THEY PUBLICLY FOSTERED CLOSER RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA ON BASIS OF NONINTERFERENCE AND MUTUAL RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY, THE STANDARD FORMULATION OF ALL YUGOSLAV-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE SINCE BREZHNEV VISITED HERE IN 1971. YUGOSLAVS INFERRED FROM THAT VISIT THAT BREZHNEV DOCTRINE IS NOT APPLICABLE TO YUGOSLAVIA - A CONVICTION THAT MAY BE SOMEWHAT SHAKEN BY RECENT EVENTS.

3. TIMING, WE BELIEVE, IS GEARED PRIMARILY TO KARDELJ'S INABILITY IN MOSCOW TO GET SATISFACTORY REPLY TO YUGOSLAV DEMAND FOR SOVIET EXPLANATION OF INTENTIONS, PERSUADING TITO THAT TIME HAD COME TO PUT COMINFORMISTS ON TRIAL AND LET CHIPS FALL. THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS THAT SOME YUGOSLAVS LEAKED STROY BECAUSE THEY FELT THAT TITO'S DALLYING WHILE KARDELJ AND OTHERS DISCUSSED MATTER WITH SOVIETS AND OLD MAN'S REPORTED DETERMINATION NOT TO HAVE OPEN BREAK WITH SOVIETS MEANT THAT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE SUPPRESSED.

4. SEPT 20 TANJUG RELEASE ON TRIALS REPORTED THAT FIRST ACTIONS AGAINST COMINFORMISTS WERE MADE IN APRIL. DIPLOMATS IN TWO EMBASSIES HERE CLAIM THEY HEARD OF CASE AS EARLY AS MAY, BUT IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT INVESTIGATION WAS CONCLUDED AND HARD EVIDENCE ON SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COMPLICITY HAD BEEN DEVELOPED AT THAT POINT.

5. YUGOSLAVS CONFRONTED SOVIETS WITH EVIDENCE IN JULY WHEN, WE UNDERSTAND, DOLANC CALLED IN SOVIET AMBASSADOR STEPANOV (NOT REPORTED IN PRESS). THERE WERE NUMEROUS SUBSEQUENT YUGOSLAV-SOVIET MEETINGS AT WHICH SUBJECT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. WE NOTE IN ADDITION THAT LCY EXCOM SECRETARY GRICKOV ALSO MET WITH CZECH AMBASSADOR NALPKA IN BELGRADE ON JULY 24 TO DISCUSS "RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES". WE UNDERSTAND THAT SUBSEQUENT TO

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THESE MEETINGS, DOLANC PREPARED REPORT ON COMINFORMISTS WHICH BEGAN TO CIRCULATE AMONG TOP PARTY OFFICIALS LATTER PART OF AUGUST.

6. KARDELJ HAD BEEN WAITING IN WINGS TO UNDERTAKE FINAL MISSION TO SOVIETS. A SOVIET EMBOFF INFORMED US JULY 12 THAT KARDELJ WOULD VISIT SOVIET UNION "SOON", EXPRESSING SURPRISE OVER TIMING. VISIT DID NOT TAKE PLACE FOR SIX

MORE WEEKS, HOWEVER, PROBABLY WHILE TITO WAITED TO SEE IF PRELIMINARY APPROACHES TO SOVIETS WOULD ELICIT SATISFACTORY RESPONSE. WITH INSTRUCTIONS FROM TITO, KARDELJ WENT TO MOSCOW SEPT 1 AND TALKED WITH KIRILENKO. HE THEN COOLED HIS HEELS IN SIBERIA FOR TEN DAYS UNTIL HE COULD SEE BREZHNEV. ACCORDING TO PRESS RELEASE OF MEETING, KARDELJ AND BREZHNEV DISCUSSED RANGE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN WARM AND COMRADELY ATMOSPHERE. ON RETURN TO YUGOSLAVIA SEPT 10, KARDELJ SAID COMPLEX OF MUTUAL RELATIONS AND CONCRETE QUESTIONS OF COOPERATION - BOTH PARTY AND STATE - AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED AND FULL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON "IMPORTANT" QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONAL CURRENT EVENTS. DESPITE DISARMING LANGUAGE OF THESE STATEMENTS, THERE IS NO DOUBT NOW THAT KARDELJ GOT LITTLE SATISFACTION FROM SOVIETS ON PROTEST OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN COMINFORMIST PLOT ALTHOUGH HE AND BREZHNEV PROBABLY AGREED NOT TO ALLOW MATTER TO CAUSE SERIOUS RUPTURE IN RELATIONS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BELGRADE 4761

7. TITO REMAINED ON VACATION BEYOND HIS USUAL SEPT 1 RETURN TO WORK. DOLANC MADE MAJOR SPEECH AT VIS SEPT 8 IN WHICH HE MADE PASSING REFERENCES TO COMINFORMIST ELEMENTS. KARDELJ RETURNED SEPT 10 AND TITO WAS REPORTEDLY FURIOUS WHEN HE HEARD KARDELJ'S REPORT. HE CANCELLED USUAL APPEARANCE AT ZAGREB FAIR AND INSTEAD CONCOCTED MEETING WITH JESENICE AKTIV TO GO PUBLIC WITH COMINFORMIST CASE. ACCORDING TO JOURNALIST, TRIALS BEGAN AFTER HE GAVE SPEECH AND LASTED ONLY TWO DAYS. TANJUG RELEASED PROSECUTOR'S STATEMENT AND COMMENTARY SEPT 20 AFTER VERDICTS WERE RETURNED AND SENTENCES METED OUT.

8. A SOVIET DIPLOMAT IN WELL-PREPARED PRESENTATION ACKNOWLEDGED ON DAY OF TITO SPEECH THAT EVENT WILL MEAN "SERIOUS SETBACK" IN YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE TANJUG COMMENTARY ON THE CASE BARELY VEILS ULTIMATE SOVIET CONFIDENTIAL

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RESPONSIBILTiy FOR ACTIVITY WHICH IS TERMED HOSTILE, RELENTLESSLY PURSUED OVER 25 YEARS AND AIMED AT OVERTHROW OF PRESENT YUGOSLAV POLITICAL SYSTEM. IN OBVIOUS WARNING TO SOVIETS, COMMENTARY SAYS SUCH ACTIVITY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED, THAT "IT IS ACTIVITY AIMED NOT ONLY AGAINST OUR COUNTRY BUT ALSO AGAINST THE BASIC PRINCIPLES ON WHICH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ARE FOUNDED, ON WHICH COOPERATION AND FRIENDLY TIES AMONG NATIONS MUST REST". TANJUG ADDED THAT ACTION MUST NEITHER BE UNDERESTIMATED NOR OVERESTIMATED NOR SPECULATIONS IN THE WESTERN PRESS ABOUT YUGOSLAV (POLICY) "TURN-ABOUTS".

9. COMMENTARY THUS REINFORCES OUR VIEW THAT TITO DOES NOT WANT OPEN BREAK WITH SOVIETS. UNLESS THERE ARE LATER REVELTIONS OF EVEN MORE FLAGRANT SOVIET ACTIVITIES, OR KREMLIN ATTEMPTS TO APPLY POLITICAL OR MILITARY PRESSURE, TITO APPARENTLY INTENDS TO CONTINUE NORMAL STATE RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS, CZECHS AND HUNGARIANS WHO WERE IMPLICATED IN CONSPIRACY. FIRST EVIDENCE OF THIS IS THAT CURRENT SOVIET VISITS HERE - DEPUTY DEFMIN KULIKOV AND DEPUTY PREMIER NOVIKOV - AT LEAST ON SURFACT, WERE NOT AFFECTED. THERE IS NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT YUGOSLAVS WILL CONTINUE MONITOR CAREFULLY BLOC ACTIVITIES WITHIN COUNTRY AND WITH EMIGRATION AND WILL VIEW BEHAVIOUR, ESPECIALLY SOVIET, WITH MORE JAUNDICED EYE THAN APPARENTLY HAS BEEN CASE SINCE BREZHNEV VISIT BEGAN WARMING TREND.
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